

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-13 ISO-00 PC-15 USIA-15 DODE-00

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R 1215\$0Z SEP73

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7007

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NY

UNCLAS OUAGADOUGOU 1914

AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: PERMANENT INTERSTATE COMMITTEE MEETING

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MR. WILLIAMS' SPEECH AT THE PIC
HEADS OF STATE MEETING IN OUAGADOUGOU 11 SEPT:

QUOTE WORKING TOGETHER COOPERATIVELY THE GOVERNMENTS
OF THE SAHEL COUNTRIES, AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY,
HAVE AVERTED THE WORST EFFECTS OF MASS FAMINE FROM THE
TRAGIC AND DISASTEROUS DROUGHT. IT HAS BEEN A MAGNIFICENT
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EFFORT IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND THE UNITED STATES IS

PLEASED TO HAVE PLAYED ITS PART IN PROVIDING ONE THIRD
-- OR \$44 MILLION (MOSTLY IN FOOD) -- OF ALL THE RELIEF ASSISTANCE
SENT TO THE SAHEL COUNTRIES .

BUT THE TASK FACING THE PEOPLES OF THE SAHEL IN COPING WITH
THE EFFECTS OF FIVE YEARS OF DROUGHT HAS JUST BEGUN. CROPS
ARE POOR. PRODUCTION AND INCOME HAS BEEN LOST. FOOD WILL
REMAIN SHORT OVER MOST OF THE COMING YEAR. PEOPLE HAVE LOST
ALL MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD. SOILS ARE DEBILITATED, FORMERLY
PRODUCTIVE SAHEL LANDS HAVE DETERIORATED. RESERVES IN HUMAN
HEALTH AND IN RESOURCES HAVE BEEN DRAWN DOWN. THE NEEDS
AHEAD ARE GREAT.

THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE SAHEL STATES, THEIR PRESIDENTS AND
MINISTERS, MEETING HERE IN OUAGADOUGOU ARE FACING THESE
PROBLEMS WITH COURAGE AND FORESIGHT. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO
BE HERE AS PRESIDENT NIXON'S REPRESENTATIVE TO OBSERVE THE
INITIATIVES OF THE SAHEL COUNTRIES IN PLANNING COOPERATIVELY
TOGETHER FOR THE NEEDS OF THEIR PEOPLES AND IN TAKING INITIA-
TIVES FOR RECOVERY.

THE REPORT OF THE MINISTERS WHICH WE RECEIVED YESTERDAY
IS AN IMPRESSIVE DOCUMENT. THE MINISTERS HAVE SHARPENED THE
PRIORITIES. THEIR REPORT INDICATES THAT THE NUMBER ONE TASK
NOW FACING THE SAHEL COUNTRIES IS TO PUT INTO MOTION THOSE
ACTIONS WHICH WILL PREVENT A REPETITION OF THIS YEAR'S DISASTER.
THE REPORT CALLS FOR ALL MEASURES WHICH WILL MAXIMIZE NEXT
YEAR'S HARVEST AND, AT THE SAME TIME, ASSURE THAT ESSENTIAL
NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE MET. WE HEARTILY ENDORSE THIS
APPROACH. THE UNITED STATES WILL DO ITS PART TO HELP.
A SPECIAL AID TASK FORCE WILL VISIT YOUR COUNTRIES STARTING
IN ABOUT 10 DAYS TO DEVELOP WITH YOU ACTION PROGRAMS DESIGNED
TO GET UNDERWAY IN 60 DAYS TO ASSIST IN COPING WITH DROUGHT
PROBLEMS AND IN MAXIMIZING NEXT YEAR'S CROPS.

THE MINISTERS IN THEIR REPORT RECOGNIZE THAT ACTION FOR
RECOVERY MUST BE ON A BROAD FRONT. THEY PROPOSE A WIDE RANGE
OF ACTIVITIES TO BRING THE SAHEL COUNTRIES BACK TO THEIR
PRE-DROUGHT PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES AND TO RAISE THESE CAPACITIES
TO A HIGHER LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS ESSENTIAL. THE
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MINISTERS REPORT IS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN DEFINING AN INTEGRATED
AND COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR THE REGION.

THE US IS PREPARED TO HELP WITH BOTH MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL
RESOURCES. MANY OF YOU KNOW THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS
REGIONS IN ITS WESTERN PART WHICH RESEMBLE THE SAHEL IN MANY
RESPECTS. WE HAVE EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING AND MANAGING
SEMI-ARID LANDS. WE EXPERIENCED A DISASTER IN THE 1930'S
SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH HAS STRUCK THE SAHEL COUNTRIES.

THROUGH FAILURE TO PRACTICE PROPER FARMING AND RANGE TECHNIQUES, A VAST AREA IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES BECAME COMPLETELY DEBILITATED AND THE SOIL WAS WORN OUT OR WASHED AWAY. THE LAND BECAME UNPRODUCTIVE AND DRY. IT BECAME KNOWN AS THE "GREAT DUST BOWL." TODAY THAT SAME AREA HAS DEVELOPED INTO A VERY PRODUCTIVE REGION. INDEED THIS SAME AREA WHICH ONLY SOME 35 YEARS AGO WAS A DISASTER AREA MUCH LIKE THE SAHEL HAS BECOME THE BREADBASKET OF THE UNITED STATES WHERE CEREALS ARE GROWN IN ABUNDANCE AND LARGE RANCHES PRODUCE VAST QUANTITIES OF LIVESTOCK. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS REQUIRED THE PASSING OF STRINGENT LAWS TO CONTROL RANGES AND GRAZING PLUS THE APPLICATION OF WELL-KNOWN TECHNIQUES OF LAND MANAGEMENT, PASTURE CONTROL AND FARM MANAGEMENT.

THROUGH THE US NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND THE TOP AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES, WE ARE PREPARED TO MARSHAL OUR EXPERIENCE AND TO WORK WITH THE SAHEL COUNTRIES ON THEIR PROBLEMS.

PRESIDENT NIXON ASKED ME TO ASSURE YOU OF OUR CONTINUING SUPPORT TO HELP MEET YOUR EXPRESSED NEEDS AND INITIATIVES AND TO WORK TOWARDS RECOVERY FROM THIS CATASTROPHIC DROUGHT.

BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THESE MEETINGS AND THE LEADERSHIP THAT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED HERE, I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE SHAHEL WILL REALIZE THEIR FULL PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES.

I THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE AFFECTING THE DESTINY OF THIS VAST REGION. I ALSO JOIN OTHERS IN THANKING THE GOVERNMENT OF UPPER VOLTA FOR ITS SPLENDID HOSPITALITY. VIVE LES PAYS DU SAHEL.

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